

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, November 15. 1695.

Quest. 1.

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hat method shall that woman take who is marry'd to the most vexatious, sordid, malicious, proud, insolent, conceited, covetous, jealous, cross, crabbed, merciless,

cruel, contentious, froward, perverse wretch in the world, who has a notion of Scripture, and repeats it as roundly and frequently as most do their Pater Noster, but instead of worshipping, he sets up himself for a Deity, and preaches no Doctrine in his Family but subjection to himself, Wives obey your Husbands, and the like, while he is so far from loving his Wife, that he mortally hates her, nor is he capable of loving any thing but a pipe of Tobacco and Gaming, in which he employs whole nights with the refuse of the Earth, a degree worse than himself if possible: notwithstanding which his wife has been always faithful to him and careful of his concerns, and brought him a fortune above his Circumstances or Merits; Whom yet he never speaks to nor commands, but with worse words than men give their slaves, so that she can have no manner of comfort in Society with him: May she not therefore have liberty to divert her self with civil company, provided there be no breach of Virtue, neither does she design to be in any mans company alone, only would willingly converse a little more, to lighten the intolerable yoke that she's compell'd to bear during her life, unless God be so merciful to take him away by Death, of which there is yet a little hope.

Ans. Now were the poor man who has all these hard words thrown blindfold at his head, half of which did he really deserve, hee'd be fit to be shown about for a Monster, did he but hear his fine Character, and all the Encomiums that are bestowed upon him either by his own dear wife, or doubtless by some very good friend, he wou'd answer every branch of his Inditement in this or the like manner. To [vexatious] hee'd return [provocations] to [sordid] [Thrift] and [an expensive wife] to [malicious] prejudice to [proud, insolent, conceited] [a just sence of his own place and merits] to [covetous] as before. To [jealous] too much love, or too good reason [To cross, merciless, cruel] as before. To [contentious] [his own defence] [To froward and perverse] [Scandal; or Infection, and Example.] [To his urging the Scripture] That there's need on't [To his repeating it] [That she's never the better] And so on to the end of the Inditement. But supposing all these ill words be true of the man, and all the good of the woman, supposing she shou'd have met with such a strange kind of Creature, as there's ne're a shrow in the world bad enough to match him, that he really behaves himself as here represented, and that she has given him no provocation to such treatment either by her present or past behaviour, which she ought impartially to examine, the method she's to take is the same she wou'd under the plague, or any other terrible and unavoidable Calamity, which is to submit to Gods will and bear all patiently, waiting for his time to deliver her, if she can't work upon him by any such lawful methods as common prudence may suggest, since supposing all that has been said shou'd be true; Yet unless he's false to her Bed, or threatens her Life, she can't honestly leave him, tho we must confess 'tis more decent for her, whatsoever the provocation has been, to wait his Death, than wish, or hope it, which seems a degree of compassing it, and to have a care what company she keeps when out of his, as well as not to neglect her Family or him, since otherwise there's a great deal of danger lest she shou'd not long continue that faithful careful wife that she's now represented.

Quest. 2. There being an Act of Parliament which obliges all retailers of wine not to sell Claret at more than six pence per quart on penalty of 5l. for every such default, and granting a reward out of such fines to the per-

son who shall inform against any so offending. Query, whether I, being not only a very good Friend to Claret, and willing to drink it at the cheapest rate, but besides much troubled to see our great Lawmakers so slighted, may not without any Detriment to my Honour, give a Magistrate information of some people who frequently transgress this Injunction by selling their Claret at two shillings per Bottle? An answer to this wou'd oblige a great number of jolly Bacchanalians, and in particular yours, &c.

Ans. A notable nice question this (as Tommy says) for if we don't answer it to the purpose you'll say 'tis because we can't (tho that seems an indifferent good reason) and if we do, never a Glass of good Red must we look for more at the shop again. But to try if we can please all parties, we'll give you advice which if practis'd will bring down Claret in a weeks time to the statute price, without any diminution to your Honour, and is in it self practicable enough; and yet after all, is no more likely to be actually put in practice than the Act of Parliament.

Let all the jolly Fellows of this side Temple-Bar (for o' the t'other side sure they that we must suppose those that made the Act, have taken care already to see it fulfilled) let 'em all meet together in their proper persons, or at least make a small detachment of some Ten or twenty Thousand of their number, with your worship's self in the head of 'em: Take all poor D A's Searches after Claret, and lay 'em before you for your Direction, with as many Additions and Emendations as shall seem to you convenient: This done, divide and subdivide your selves, (like an Army of Tartars,) thro' all quarters of the City, so many to every Tavern, call for your wine, drink fair, no more than you can pay for, at two shillings per Bottle, and carry well off when you've done, for fear you stumble on the stocks in your return: Do thus for a week together, changing your Taverns every Evening. At the end of this fair week's work, meet together, and sum up your accounts, fix your Bottles, Marshal your Evidence, and away to the next Justice of Peace ('twou'd be better if you cou'd get one of your own Company, but that's impossible) make your Affidavits and recover your mony. But now for your Honour, that the Taverniers mayn't say you are a parcel of Poaching Currs, that do all this to get mony, your way will be to pitch upon some young Drawer of your own knowledge, who has more wit than mony, and more honesty than both, give all the mony to the Servant you have got from the masters, and set him up with it; making him beforehand give good security never to presume to sell your dearly beloved at a higher rate, than as 'tis at present by Law established. And if you've once try'd this experiment, and 'twon't do, 'twill then be time enough to think upon another.

Quest. 3. What do you think of the Chinese Chronicles, who have Records of things done long before Adams time?

Ans. The same that we do of Lucians true History, or of the renowned Chronicles of Scotland and Ireland, who can't be content to fetch their royal pedigree at a less distance than Pharo King of Egypt, nay, sometimes they'll rise to three or four Generations before the Flood, And we have reason for this censure, for if we consider all the remains of ancient History, we find every where Footsteps of the Infancy of the world, for even the Egyptian Dynasties are now agreed, either to have been Contemporary Kingdoms, or if successive, that they reckon'd by Lunar years; or that they were merely invented by the lying Egyptian Priests, and piec'd up out of broken Traditions, and wilfully mistaken Histories, which is more likely than both, and which we have already formerly shown in some instances, and

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could do it in more. But there's yet this to be said of the long winded Chinese Historians, which carry up things not only beyond the Flood, but even beyond the beginning of the world, that they are contradicted by others of their own nation, which are reckon'd more Authentic even by their own learned men, and which differ no more from the account given us in Sacred History than the seventy do from the original, of which any one may be satisfy'd who will but take the pains to consult Father Magaillans History of China, not many years since translated into our own Language.

Quest. 4. I have had the good hap to court a young Lady of a very good Fortune, and gain her good will; but her Fortune much surmounting mine, her Uncle that was left a Guardian over her, her Parents being dead, is very averse to it, and strives to break it off; which, if it should be done, would, I fear, very much endanger the Health of the Lady; I desire your Judgment whether it may not be lawful to marry without his consent?

Ans. In matter of conscience we must confess an Uncle is not a Parent, nor does the Guardian seem to have any coercive, only a directive power, unless where that and the disposal of the Fortune be expressly left in his hands, and if the Lady be of years of Discretion she seems to have yet more right to dispose of her self, and if she has enough for her self and you too, she may make you both happy, rather than, it may be, see her self sold to one that bids higher. Tho at the same time, she would do well in point of prudence, to be as well assur'd as possible of the disposition and behaviour of the person to whom she gives her self and so fair a Fortune.

Quest. 5. In the Memoirs of the sieur Ponlis we meet with a strange passage concerning the Death of his Friend. Pray your opinion what should be the occasion of it, and what should cause such a sudden stiffness, and those exactly circular burns on both his Ankle Bones, tho he lay at a distance from the Fire.

Ans. We haven't the Book by us. If you'll be at the pains to transcribe the passage, we'll take a fair Guess at it, and it may be that's as much as any body else can do.

Quest. 6. A friend of mine is, I find, deeply in Love with a young woman who is so much inferior to him, that I'm sensible 'twould be his utter ruine if he should marry her. He protests to me he is but in jest and has no such thoughts, but desires me not to discover it to his Friends, which makes me more concern'd in the matter. Pray your advice, how I may behave my self, and be blameless, whatever happens?

Ans. If he's in jest, the more shame to him, if he pretends to her he's in earnest; as there's little doubt but he does: If he's in earnest, you say he's ruin'd. If you tell him of it again, 'tis probable he'll only be more secret, but not change his mind; you can't therefore, we think, be just to that Friendship you have for him, unless you make his Friends acquainted with the whole affair, if you find he still prosecutes the Intrigue.

Quest. 7. Will not the Conclusion of a peace with France, on the best Terms we can expect, be more to the disadvantage of our Nation than the continuance of the present Taxes?

Ans. That lies before better Judges than you or we. Tho even they will know better when we see what the Enemy proposes.

Quest. 8. I dreamt lately I was emptying an House of Office. Pray what may it be a sign of?

Ans. A sign, perhaps, that your important query would be put to that nameless use which we have just now made on't.

Quest. 9. I desire you to resolve me this question as soon as possible. There was two certain persons that were in Love one with another (being play-fellows) and then wished rashly, that they might brake their necks if so be they was not married in such a time, accordingly they agreed on the time of Marriage; but it pleas'd God to Afflict one of them with sickness at the time appointed. Query, Whether or no

it is Convenient for them to marry now, asking God's pardon for their rashness, for they are both intire Lovers. Your humble servant, R. T.

Ans. You ought humbly to ask pardon for the rashness and wickedness of such an Imprecation, and marry as soon as you can.

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